

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LA PAZ 03920 071415Z

53

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6903

INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY LIMA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: CUENCA MEETING RESULTS

REFERENCE: LA PAZ 3643

AMEMBASSY LIMA FOR FULLMER

SUMMARY: MEETING OF FOREIGN MINISTERS AT RIO DE LA PLATA RIVER BASIN (CUENCA DE LA PLATA) COUNTRIES ENDED OFFICIALLY MAY 29. MEETING WAS IMMEDIATELY DEEMED AS AN ENCOURAGING SUCCESS BY ITS BOLIVIAN ORGANIZERS. EVEN U.S. JOURNALIST PRESENT TOLD USIS OFFICER THAT SHE LEFT WITH IMPRESSION THAT ALTHOUGH THERE WERE FEW CONCRETE ACCOMPLISHMENTS, SPIRIT OF MEETING WILL HELP MAKE THIS INTEGRATION MOVEMENT MORE EFFECTIVE IN FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. HOST BOLIVIAN DELEGATION CARRIED AWAY MOST VISIBLE GAINS

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PAGE 02 LA PAZ 03920 071415Z

FROM CONFERENCE. TWO CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS CALLED FOR EARLY

ACTION (1) TO ESTABLISH NEW US\$ 20 MILLION PROJECT FUND AND (2) TO LOCATE IT IN BOLIVIA (SEE REFTEL). PARAGUAY AND ARGENTINA SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED THAT FUND HEADQUARTERS BE IN ONE OF BOLIVIAN CITIES WITHIN BASIN. GOB CONSEQUENTLY CHOSE COUNTRY'S LEGAL CAPITAL SUCRE, DESPITE ITS DISTANCE FROM INTERNATIONAL AIR ROUTES. FUND WILL BE STAFFED BY TECHNICIANS SELECTED FROM CUENCA COUNTRIES AND DIRECTED BY NON-BOLIVIAN.

2. ANOTHER CONFERENCE RESOLUTION CALLED CUENCA'S INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE (CIC) TO ARRANGE "WHEN NECESSARY" STUDY OF NAVIGATION BETWEEN CORUMBA AND PUERTO BUSCH ON PARAGUAY RIVER. USE OF RIVER WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR BOLIVIAN DEVELOPMENT OF MUTUN COMPLEX. BRITISH GOVERNMENT-FUNDED MUTUN TRANSPORT STUDY JUST GETTING UNDERWAY IS LIKELY TO LAY GROUNDWORK FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION. ON BILATERAL LEVEL BOLIVIA RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM ARGENTINA THAT IT WOULD SOON CONCLUDE AGREEMENT TO BUILD ROAD FROM JOINT BORDER THROUGH TARIJA AND POTOSI AND FROM BRAZIL TO BUILD VARIOUS ROADS AS PROMISED EARLIER.

3. OTHER CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS WERE OF HOUSEKEEPING NATURE. CIC WAS ORDERED TO DIVIDE LABORS INTO FOLLOWING CATEGORIES: TRANSPORTATION, HYDRAULIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES, ECONOMIC COOPERATION, SOCIAL COOPERATION, PUBLIC SERVICES AND INSTITUTIONS. ALL PAST RESOLUTIONS WILL BE REVIEWED AND ORDERED ACCORDINGLY. BRAZIL WILL HOST NEXT YEAR'S MEETING.

4. CIC HAD PREPARED TRANSPORTATION STUDY FOR INFRASTRUCTURE SUBCOMMITTEE WHICH MET DURING CONFERENCE. STUDY RECOMMENDED USE OF CONTAINERS AND EMPHASIS ON WATER TRANSPORTATION OVER HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT. NEITHER THAT SUBCOMMITTEE NOR ANY OTHER ARRIVED AT MAJOR CONCLUSIONS ALTHOUGH EACH COUNTRY EXCHANGED INFORMATION ON PROJECTS CONTEMPLATED IN BASIN. BOLIVIA FOR ITS PART HAS ESTABLISHED COMMISSION TO STUDY RESOURCES OF PILCOMAYO SYSTEM.

5. PRESS TRIED TO STIR INTEREST BY REFERRING TO ITAIPU DEVELOPMENT AND NOTING ABSENCE FROM AGENDA OF OBVIOUS TOPIC, I.E., USE OF SYSTEMS WATERS. ARGENTINE DELEGATION SUGGESTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 LA PAZ 03920 071415Z

THROUGH PRESS THAT ALL PROJECTS ON RIVERS OF BASIN SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO PRE-CONSULTATIONS AMONG CUENCA COUNTRIES. BRAZIL FONMIN AZEREDO DA SILVEIRA LABELED THIS AS "INTELLECTUAL ARGUMENT" AND WHILE REFUSING TO DECLARE HIMSELF NOTED THAT ONE COUNTRY COULD THUS VETO VALUABLE PROJECT.

6. IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR EMBASSY TO SECURE ATMOSPHERE AND TRUE MEASURE OF COCHABAMBA CONFERENCE FROM OUR VANTAGE POINT IN

LA PAZ. BOLIVIAN PARTICIPANTS WERE OBVIOUSLY AND FOR OBVIOUS REASONS PLEASED AT OUTCOME. MEETING DID SEEM WELL ARRANGED AND QUIET BUT PLEASANT SETTING PROBABLY STIMULATED INFORMAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN PARTICIPANTS. EMBOFF WHO ARRIVED AFTER MEETING OBSERVED LONG LUNCHEON CONVERSATION MAY 30 BETWEEN ARGENTINE AND BRAZILIAN MINISTERS. BRAZIL SENT LARGEST DELEGATION (33 LISTED COMPARED TO ARGENTINE'S 14). NINE INTERNATIONAL AND INTER-AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS, PLUS FRANCE, SENT MIDDLE-LEVEL REPRESENTATIVES. THE ARGENTINE DELEGATION USED PRESS TO CALL FOR GREATER AREA ECONOMIC INTEGRATION BUT DESPITE "NEW SPIRIT", MOST DELEGATIONS SEEMED TO RECOGNIZE THAT BASIN INTEGRATION MOVEMENT IS FIRST AND FOREMOST COORDINATION OF PHYSICAL REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS MORE DELIBERATE AND SLOWER PROCESS.
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